

**MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S
BUDGET AND BOND HEARING PRESENTATION
MILFORD TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM
JANUARY 19, 2004**

PRESENT: Nancy A. Amato, Chairman
Cynthia A. Herman, Vice-Chairman
Selectman O'Connell, Member
Selectman Daniels, Member
Leonard Mannino, Member
Katherine Chambers, Town Administrator

BUDGET COMMITTEE ATTENDEES:
Charles Sweeney, Chairman
Terry Nostrand, Member
Terry Parker, Member
Deanna Carter, Member
Joseph Stella, Member
Larry Pickett, Member
David Quigley, Member
(Excused: Therese Oriani-Muller and Ryan Hansen)

BOND PUBLIC HEARING, ARTICLE 3 – NEW POLICE STATION

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Amato opened the Public Hearing on the issuance of Bonds and Notes at 6:35 p.m. She noted at the meeting the Selectmen would address all twenty-seven warrant articles before the public, during which the public will have a chance to state their concerns or issues about each article. The Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen will also state their views on why they either supported each article or not.

Chairman Amato then introduced all of the Board of Selectmen: Vice-Chairman Herman, Selectman O'Connell, Selectman Daniels, and Selectman Mannino

Chairman Amato then introduced the Budget Advisory Committee Chairman Chuck Sweeney. Mr. Sweeney then introduced the rest of the members: Terry Nostrand, Terry Parker, Joe Stella, Deanna Carter, Larry Pickett, and David Quigley.

Article 3 – Police Facility - \$2,950,260

Chairman Amato read Article 3 as follows:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,950,260 (Two Million Nine Hundred Fifty Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Dollars) for the demolition of the Garden Street School, and the construction and equipping of a Milford Police Facility on that site, Map 25 Lot 67, which the School District has agreed to give to the Town for this purpose, and to authorize the Selectmen to raise the appropriation by borrowing not more than \$2,950,260 under the Municipal Finance Act, (RSA 33) and to issue bonds, bond anticipation notes, or notes therefore, and to determine the rate of interest thereon, to be repaid from general taxation, and to authorize the Selectmen to take all other necessary action to carry out this project. The Board of Selectmen supports this Article. The Budget Advisory Committee supports this Article. This is a Special Article in accordance with RSA 32.

Note: (It is estimated that the Town will receive \$640,000 in Impact Fees as revenue to offset the cost of this construction borrowing.)

Note: As this is a bond issue, this vote requires, under State law, sixty (60%) percent affirmative vote to pass. This is a 20-year bond issue and this Article does not impact the tax rate until 2005 and will then have an estimated tax impact of 37 cents.

Selectman Daniels spoke to the Article. This bond issue for the construction of a new police station is supported by the Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee, the Police Department, the Police Union, the Facilities Planning Committee, and Do-It. The Facilities Planning Committee was guided by voters' feedback from the facilities survey that was distributed last fall. This diverse committee spent numerous hours, weeks, and months on configuration, location, cost, and long-range goals. This will take care of the space needs of the Police Department for the next twenty years. Funding will be provided with of a twenty-year bond that does not impact the Town until 2005. The estimated tax impact in 2005 is 37 cents or, on a hundred thousand dollar home, about 37 dollars during the first year. The Town will receive \$640,000 in Impact Fees over the next 20 years or so to offset cost. In addition, one of the options to the Selectmen in the future is to sell the property of the old police station and use the proceeds to further reduce the overall cost.

Rodny Richey of the Facilities Planning Committee made a presentation on behalf of the Committee. Copies were distributed to audience. Mr. Richey introduced the Facilities Committee members who are: Gil Archanbault, Mary Albina, Paul Bagley, Donna Barr, Kathy Bauer, Kent Chappell, Geri Dickerman, Jerry Dussault, Tim Finan, Shane Hooker, Cheryl Merrill, Liz Michaud, Russ Monbleau, Mervin Newton, Denise Long, Lincoln Daley, Rodny Richey, Leighton White, Bill Parker and Walter Murray. This Committee started April 30th and is a diversified group from the Town.

Mr. Richey addressed the public:

The Facilities Committee was not just a group that was selected for the Police Facility, but also for a Master Facilities Plan for the Town in the future. The police station was the priority. The present police station was given to the Town in 1988 and the Town did renovations. Before it was a police station, it was a motel and later, the office for Hitchiner Manufacturing. It is not and never was constructed to be a police facility. The roof is in bad shape, the heating and air conditioning is in bad shape and security system is non-existing. We don't have what we need in a modern police station. The building is on a concrete slab and it retains moisture. This building has poor air quality, mold/mildew, and dampness problems. The existing building has solid concrete block walls that cannot have cable put in easily for telecommunications and computers. Current cold weather (as well as in previous years) inside the bathroom caused the fixtures to freeze because of a lack of a heat distribution system.

Other issues of concern with the existing building are a lack of space to meet police regulations, inability to provide sight/sound separation for male/female/juvenile detainees; male-only locker room; no private rooms for sensitive "client" conversations; limited capability to properly secure or store evidence. There is no heat in part of the building. We do not meet building codes in several areas including: electric, heating and plumbing.

This Committee did not try to reinvent the wheel when we looked at this situation. We used as a guide what has been done in previous years when it was looked at. We pooled it all together and looked at all possible sites, evaluated sites, and scored the sites and we narrowed it down to four that might work. Those four were narrowed down to one or two that would really work. The four the Committee narrowed it down to were Elm Street (current police station), South Street (DPW), School Street (adjacent to Fire Station), and Garden Street School. We were looking for the possibility of combining the two emergency services, police and ambulance in one building. Because of cost issues, we felt the police would be the priority right now. The Committee agreed we should propose to build a 15,500 square foot two story police station on the 2+ acre site, removing Garden Street School, and incorporating the character and materials (as appropriate) into a new building. This option will cost nearly \$900,000 less than renovation of the existing Garden Street School.

There were concerns on the Committee about removing the Garden Street School. The school is presently used to house the Sage School. Garden Street has been around for a long time and people are reluctant to tear it down. People wanted to use it as office space but the Bales School can be used for that as well. We found this site to be in concert with what the voters who were surveyed had asked for in a new police station: keep it downtown, try to use Town-owned land, make the location easily accessible. This criterion has been met in this location. We could not find the site that was everything we wanted it to be and this came closest. The site has all the utilities it needs. It will require minimal site work once the demolition is accomplished. It has both vehicle and pedestrian access.

It was determined we couldn't renovate Garden Street School because we are in an earthquake zone with stringent building codes for police stations. Because of the age and construction of Garden Street School, it would require extensive renovations and it would be better to start over. It would cost \$900,000 to add the framework it would need. We based the cost on a conceptual design that provides a facility that we projected would provide for twenty years of growth of the Town and police operations. The police station is a center of operations, not a place where police stay and then go someplace. Essential operations must be accomplished at their headquarters such as

evidence, lockup, armory, and anything that law enforcement requires. There is a need for a certain amount of core facility offices for the police station.

This Committee looked at police stations in a number of different communities and found quite a variation. We also looked at the present police station to see how much we use now and projected how much we would need over the next twenty years. The Committee feels that 15,500 feet is the proper recommendation of the proper amount of approximate building space we would need for a police station for 20 years. The Building Design Committee will be responsible for deciding exactly how much square footage will be necessary. Whether the space will be exactly 15,500, 15,400, 15,600 will be their decision. This article does not include the demolition of the current police station on Elm Street. Whoever buys the building on Elm Street will be responsible for the demolition of that building if they decide to do so or our Town might have to absorb it. Also, the moving of the Sage School will go on the warrant for the School.

We decided on design criteria based on our investigation on other police facilities and what we are doing in the police operation that we have now. Many members toured the Merrimack Police Station and other members toured other police facilities in the area to see if we are building more into the design than we need to. One of the items of the design is a community/training room. We do not have adequate space for meetings in Town. There is not a lot of space in Town for meetings such as scouts and other groups to meet. We found a meeting/training room in the Merrimack Police Station, and it is used all the time. Not only does it provide space, but provides a place to interact with our police and see what our facility is all about and can be used dually not only for police but other emergency services.

The key items are the new items. What we have now and what we need is in the new facility. In present facility, we do not have a juvenile holding area; separation of sight and sound capability (which is a requirement and regulation that we are not meeting); training room; covered parking for police vehicles (not for all but for most of the patrol cars); women's locker room; and kennels. We have decided that it is the responsibility of this force to act as animal control function. We cannot send an officer to Bedford all the time to take stray animals there. Kennels are needed as a place to hold animals until at a reasonable time we can transport to Bedford or have owners pick up their animals. We included a sally port, the place you drive the police vehicle in and lessen opportunity for prisoners to escape. There is a garage door to enter and another one to exit from. The port would have a security camera on at all times. This port would also have easy access to drive in and out of but still maintain capability of keeping prisoners secure.

Combination consideration – this is an area where we were disappointed. We felt as a Committee it would be good to bring emergency services that needed space together. Police and ambulance are not the best combination for training on what they do respectively. Ambulance and fire are more compatible. The Garden Street site, to combine police and ambulance, would need a significant land purchase. In a building like the Garden Street School with no land purchase, it would have been a tight squeeze for police and ambulance. We have 2400 square feet presently at the ambulance service and there is no room for growth where they are. We already took out a conference room to give them space to grow. They needed the office space since they bill for services and do bring in funds that way. To have some growth they need more than 2400 square feet. There are two bays down there that can barely get the current ambulances in there now without scraping the mirrors off. The newer ambulances have dual wheels on the rear and are therefore wider. We won't be able to get a newer ambulance until we get a better bay area.

What are we doing about ambulance and fire? We are in the planning business, not just the take-care-of-the-police business. We looked at all locations with all those things in mind and kept location information in our database. We are looking at ambulance alone and in with combination with fire. We are looking at the west end of Town where there is likely a need for a fire/ambulance facility. The Town is growing heavily in that direction and it isn't as quick a run for fire/ambulance from the Oval to get to MileSlip Road, as it ought to be. We need to be closer. We are looking at that as a possible need and we want to evaluate those needs further as the Committee continues to do its work and we will then be able to make a recommendation as to ambulance and fire.

The police facility was rated the highest priority, as we looked at all the needs. Many of us have been believing this for a long time, as this is the third year that it has been brought forward as a recommendation for a police facility. The others have not proven successfully for various reasons. There isn't any doubt in any Committee member's mind that this is the number one priority.

Garden Street School, again, I don't know if any of us say it's the very best we could wish to have in the way of sites, but it's the best available site that we have. We could wait a year and see if something better comes up but we don't see it on the horizon. Garden Street meets two out of three criteria that the voters had indicated: downtown location and Town owned land. Forecasting needs (for ambulance and fire), we are seeing what they have to have

we are not going to be extravagant. Fire and ambulance are high on the list. We support these activities and we hope support continues to grow.

Mr. Richey opened the presentation to questions from the audience:

Ernie Barrett asked the Budget Committee if they approved this article.

Chuck Sweeney answered that it is the belief of the Budget Advisory Committee that the Police Department does need a new facility. However, we do have a majority/minority vote; we are supporting the plan that is set forth but we do have a minority vote which we will ask members to share in detail at the deliberative session.

Ernie Barrett stated he felt the Budget Committee should be prepared to make a statement of their position.

Chuck Sweeney stated that after the initial review by the Budget Advisory Committee there were some concerns about the ability to leverage the current plan that's temporarily before you for a combined ambulance/police facility. We initially voted on the proposal and voted down the plan in our initial vote. The Facilities Committee came and met with the Budget Advisory Committee and provided a detailed presentation of the work that they did over the last six months, about their reviewing the ambulance and some of the details around that. Based on that clarification and some additional information and work that they had done about a possibility of a combined facility at the current proposed property the Budget Committee voted to support it – by a very close margin. I think that we had a dialog around all the warrant articles including the operating budget. There is a lot of detailed dialog that takes place regarding it. Committee members can represent their concerns tonight if they wish as part of the panel. Currently our vote is to support it, by a very tight margin.

Mr. Bertram asked if we were considering the school needs along with ambulance and fire.

Rodny Richey: The answer is yes we have been using the Capital Improvements Plan as part of our analysis and that does include the concerns the school has because they are part of that.

Another citizen asked what does the plan provide for ambulance and fire?

Rodny Richey answers: The recommendation of the current Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which is provided by the Planning Board and their CIP Committee to the Board of Selectmen has an ambulance facility addition in 2006. The Fire West End station we allocated in 2007. We have most likely the same year for the Heron Pond addition in 2007/2008. In the next several years, we have several capital items that need to be considered.

Chairman Amato asked people to state their names and come to the microphone because they could not be heard in the audience.

John Wilde asks stated his question concerns the cost of providing space for the Sage School, the special education school, which is currently housed at the Garden Street School.

Rodny Richey: The cost of moving is thirty thousand dollars. This is not included in the warrant for the police station but under a school warrant so that funding is available to accomplish that move if the police station passes. It is a cost that is being recognized.

Ed Farrington asked about funds for demolishing the current police facility.

Rodny Richey: We would not be allocating money. If it were decided to sell the Elm Street site, then the buyer would be responsible for any demolition. However, if it were changed into another use then the Town would at some time have the responsibility of paying for it. We have not allocated funds for that.

Chairman Amato asks for people to come to the microphone because the tape is not picking up their names or their questions.

Judy Parker asked about the use of the facilities available in Town specifically about Garden Street and Bales. She asked if we looked at each of our properties and asked what is the highest and best use of each.

Rodny Richey: I can't say that we have done that to the extent she is referring to as a Committee, but we have used the expertise in our Committee which includes people in construction, people involved in some financial aspects, limited real estate experience and making those considerations. We have not engaged any consultants or involved

any expense other than that which was required as we tried to develop our architectural design and potential concepts for the police station. I certainly agree, and the Committee I'm sure agrees, that it's part of our charter to make those tradeoffs and evaluations of what we have and how we are projecting to use it. I can't say we have that totally laid out. That is part of what we are trying to do.

Ernie Barrett: I have two or three questions I like to get clarification on. First thing, a statement was made that the Town has never invested in a police facility. This seems kind funny but I think I'm young enough or old enough to remember when we renovated this whole basement here (referring to Town Hall) specifically for a police station. So I think we did invest. In those days, it was a lot of money. Today it's what? That's a drop in the bucket the way we have money now. I like to talk about the land. The school is going to give you the land. Did we not have warrant articles in both in the Town Meeting and the School Meeting two or three years ago in which the ownership of the Garden Street site was going to be transferred to the Town? Has that been done? Is the deed in your hand?

Chairman Amato: The deed is not currently in our name. We do have a letter of agreement with the School District that has extended the offer to June 2004. In effect, we are all set with that issue.

Ernie Barrett: Why hasn't it been done over the last two years when we decided when we voted at the Town Meeting and the School Meeting to do it?

Chairman Amato: There wasn't a need for it at the time.

Ernie Barrett: I don't think need had anything to do with it. Anyway, that takes care of my concern there: that we can have the Town's official ownership without going back to the school district to get their permission at their district meeting. The Impact Fees that are stated in here for some \$600,000 dollars, how are those Impact Fees raised and how do they get applied to the cost of the project? In other words, would we in fact have the authority to borrow \$2.9 million but if you have \$600,000 available sitting in somebody's bank account for Impact Fees we wouldn't have to borrow the whole thing would we? How do those Impact Fees get put into the mix so that it effects and reduces the tax rate?

Rodny Richey: You know it's a complicated subject, so give me a second to get everyone up to speed here. Impact Fees come to us as a result of commercial and residential development. They come on the basis of per square feet of new building or addition to buildings. There is an Impact Fee schedule and that's the sort of first fundamental item you have to have that has been developed for the police station. That schedule says that for every square foot of additional residential development there is fifteen cents collected for the police station. So, you project that across the number of years that you are going to have that facility providing growth and services to the Town. One of the things we had problems in the past doing even if we had Impact Fees and we have not had Impact Fees very long, is if you don't collect Impact Fees for growth you lose the opportunity. If you squeeze more students into the school that it was built to hold rather than adding to it then you lose the opportunity to collect that impact fee money. We projected how much we are going to have in the way of development how much money that will be each year and we have said if the growth continues as we projected we'll end up in the twenty years this facility is being paid for with \$640,000 dollars. So, it's not sitting in anyone's bank account. It comes into the General Fund and then can be used as the General Fund is used to pay off the bond.

Ernie Barrett: In other words, there is no assurance then, or guarantee, that Impact Fees that are paid over the next twenty years will be used specifically to reduce the principal interest payment of the bond on the police station?

Rodny Richey: Katie Chambers, Town Administrator give me that answer again to that question that you gave me because I asked you the same question if you recall about a week ago. If I may, Chairman Amato.

Ernie Barrett: Or should the article be amended to indicate that is what the Town wants to do.

Katie Chambers: You can't anticipate when you are going to receive those fees. So to link them to that expenditure isn't really possible to do.

Ernie Barrett: But you could amend it to say all future Impact Fees that relate to the police station will be used to reduce principal and interest on the bond without specifying a specific amount.

Katie Chambers: Well that is already the only thing we can do by definition. Impact Fees come into the General Fund as General Fund revenue. The principal and interest payments are budgeted as an expense. You can't really budget the revenue because you don't know what to anticipate.

Ernie Barrett: My concern is you are trying to sell the police station, which I'm in favor of, with a statement in the warrant we might have \$600,000 dollars in the future to help us set a \$2.9 million dollar expenditure. But there is no assurance that in fact is going to happen. It might be decided four years from now that the Impact Fees will be used to build a school or something else. What I'm saying is I have a little bit of uncomfortable-ness with that type of statement in a warrant to help sell an article which I feel is dearly needed in the first place whether we have that 600,000 dollars in there or not to me is not the critical thing. The critical thing is we need to replace the police station. Question on the site: putting the building on the site, has that been professionally looked at? Or is that just a conceptual design over there and where and how it's going to sit on the site is going to be different?

Rodny Richey: It could be slightly different but it has been professionally looked at and this is a good generic way for the building to go. If the building changes in length or width or something then slight modification might be made. In general, when you consider the boundaries of that site, where the impound lot can best go, parking and other access this is – let's call it at least the 90% solution.

Ernie Barrett: Now I understand the building at 15,000 square feet is more than initially is needed. There will be, quote, unused space, when that building is being built. Is that my understanding?

Rodny Richey: We are building as those of us anticipating others to come into our families in one way or another, have been known to build extra rooms in our houses. We are building additional growth space into this building. That's correct.

Ernie Barrett: I would just like to say first off I support the location 110%. That's where the police station belongs. The building itself has absolutely no architectural value or historical purposes whatsoever, even though I went to school there for six years. The building was young in those days it was built in '25. I don't want to tell you when I went to school there. Secondly, I think the Budget Committee needs to get unanimously behind this warrant article. I haven't heard any reasons tonight given why there is some reluctance on some members of the Budget Committee to not fully support it or have a minority report. I think it does not behoove this Town in the importance of getting that police station, to have that kind of feeling within the Budget Committee. I think the Budget Committee should find a way to resolve the questions, whatever those questions are, because you haven't shared them with us tonight. We haven't any idea what they are. Get them resolved so you can come in and so you can say we are unanimously in support of this police station. I think it's critical. It's mandatory that we do this. That's just how I feel about it. I'm really disappointed that we have some people on the Budget Committee that have a minority point of view but we haven't heard from them. Thank you.

Rodny Richey: I'll give Chuck Sweeney on the Budget Committee a chance to respond to your last point, Ernie, in just one second. I did want to respond to your first point. It has been suggested, and the Facilities Committee has come up with some ideas already, as far as using the growth space for current needs until the police have grown into it. There are other activities in Town that do need space. And there are definitely some real needs that we have looked at that space can be used for. However, please do keep in mind that a police operational area has to have a security factor involved in it and that does limit what we can do there. We do have other activities that also requires secure spaces so it certainly is under consideration and was mentioned by the Budget Committee: let's not just let that space just sit there. We do have some ideas and plans and would be passing them on to the Design Committee to put them to use.

Chuck Sweeney: One of the clarifications I'd like to make is that I know one of the area papers had quoted that we made a vote 4-3, four supporting three opposed with two members absent on the meeting on January 13, 2004. The Committee has made a decision at the beginning of the process that we would represent the Committees' vote on any items. In the Deliberative Session, both the majority and minority would have the opportunity to present their position. Again, I just want to clarify that after the initial vote we did reconvene and vote again to all support it. The dialog and the feedback that we received tonight will be taken into consideration before we finalize our voting for all the items before Wednesday when they are due.

Rodny Richey: We are developing and okay Dave.... I'll let you go ahead

Dave Quigley: I just put a presentation together when we were sitting over there because we hadn't planned as a Budget Committee to address this tonight. Ernie has a legitimate question and it's true there was a 4-3 vote on this and there is no question that as the Budget Committee, and I'm speaking as an individual tax payer right now, but as a Budget Committee we did everything we could to find a unanimous vote on this subject. And I can pretty much say I think all of us agree that the need for a police facility is critical and that's our unity on the subject. We looked at different ways and we addressed a number of issues within our Committee that we brought to the Facilities Committee and had a dialog about that. Clearly, there was an effort on both sides to make that work but,

unfortunately, it didn't work and that's why you got a split vote, but a vote that certainly supported the Facilities Committee and the Police Department in building that facility.

But I think I want to point out that being on the Budget Committee personally for me since this is my first year, has given me a unique sense of overall needs in this Town. I've become very sensitive to lots of critical needs not just related to only the police facility but lots different organizations and departments. The roads systems that we have here, the Department of Public Works, the ambulance, on and on and on there are lots of different needs we have in this Town that require lots of money. But as a Budget Committee member, I took that responsibility very seriously. Representing the needs of the taxpayer and trying to find a way to reduce our taxes as best as we can was what brought me to vote the way I had on this particular decision.

My vote on it was based around two things: one was size and the second was overall usage of the facility that was being built. I'm not going to address today the second part, the overall usage and dual purposes because I'm not really prepared in terms of facts and the review that we had within the Budget Committee and the data that we discovered in our research. But the one thing that I put up here on an Excel spreadsheet is my concern where it all began in terms of the size of the facility. That's where I personally disagree with the basic tenant of the Facility Committee and that's in regard to the 15,500 square feet that is being built in the facility plan. I factored all the way back as far as I could to where this data might of come from – the data that they used to come up with this projection in the facility size and went all the way back to a document that was given to us by the Police Department. The projection that they used to define the number of police officers in turn defines the size of the facility needed to manage that size force in twenty years from now over the next number of years leading up to twenty years. That's the spreadsheet that you see up here.

As a taxpayer of Milford, if you ever wonder why you taxes keep going up year after year after year, I want to point out one thing that's relevant to this warrant article and that is when you look at the number of the Police Department budget (using this because it's an example, I'm sure you find this in other departments or other areas within our Town's operating budget) and when you grow the size of your employees and you add in all the other elements particular to that growth your operating budget is going to increase and therefore your taxes are going to increase. And so, I looked at the projections. I looked at a number of different things in the department. They started with fourteen officers in 2000. In 2001, they started using a new reporting system in terms of how they articulated number of calls and activities that the police force responded to in a year. What was interesting is in the year 2001 in the new reporting system the number of calls increase 449% percent. It looks pretty significant from a perceptive of increased crime or increased manpower, all kinds of things can be taken from that.

The real point to make here, all that was done was changing a reporting system. In fact, we really don't know how much it has really changed from one year to the next in terms of how busy they were, what types of crimes they were handling. We just don't know. There is just no way to figure that out. It's not just my opinion, there is an article written in the Boston Globe about this just a few months ago. Particularly, how difficult it is when the reporting systems are changed in Police Departments to get a handle on crime and crime rates. In 2001, we saw a significant rise in the reporting of calls. And that was the first year we added three new police officers. The year after that we added three more police officers. The year after that there was a request for three more police officers but we added one more police officer. If you follow the projections all the way across, this is taken directly from the department's own projection needs, you can see that by 2010 we've increased our police force 129%. It's not necessarily true at that point, that crime has increased significantly, or any other thing has necessarily increased other than we've been increasing the size of our Police Department. We increase the size of our Police Department, we increase not only the needs of the facility that's going to be needed to support that, we increase the operating budget of this Town.

Something this Budget Committee has looked at and, of course, the Selectmen have also looked at very diligently, to try to find ways of cutting back. When you look at this number, and this is the number that the Facilities Committee was given on which to base their projection and their sizing for the Police Department, it leads one to really begin to question, and which is why I began to question, the beginning of this basic tenant. There are other elements in the size of that facility based on comparisons of other facilities within the state that draw my attention. But in terms of answering, at least Ernie's question where one particular Budget Committee member's feeling of not agreeing with the proposal facility where it came from, this is the beginning of it. There are other items and other data points that we certainly might make available but we weren't prepared to do that this evening.

Liz Michaud (from Facilities Committee): There are a number of different slides we could show in response to Dave's analysis. There are a couple of things that we all have to make sure we are really clear on. There are two different things that we are talking about here. One, is the size of the police force and two is the size of the police station. And those are two very different things. A police force is based on crime statistics and things like that. But

it is only one factor and very many factors go into the overall space that is required by a police station. For instance, if we were to have a juvenile officer, which we don't have now, we would need an office for that juvenile officer. If we have 14 patrolmen that goes to 20 patrolmen we don't need another squad room, we have a squad room that is built into the facility that will accommodate that group. So, those types of things do not drive extra space in a facility. Supporting kennels is something that does not increase the officers, it's something that we are already doing today, but we don't have the space to accommodate it. We don't have the right sight/sound separation today for juveniles, men or women, we don't have a working women's locker room, we don't have enough bathrooms, we don't have heat, those things are all very independent as to the size of the police force. And if you think we don't have increased crime in Milford then you haven't been reading the papers in the last six months. It's a little bit concerning and I think we need to support our police force and support them in the police station.

Chuck Worcester: One of the elements that objectors seem to conveniently ignore when we look at the size of police stations and other support facilities in this community is that this community is on a growth kick of unprecedented proportions. When you look at the number of miles of roads that have been added since those statistics that you previously saw have occurred, I will venture a guess that we are 25% more roadways, 25% more population to service, additional business entities that must be responded to, it doesn't just apply to a Police Department, however. It applies to ambulances, to road services, all of those other things, but to ignore them in a police projection I think is a misstatement. We need to recognize that as we consider the growth and the needs of this community.

Chairman Amato: I do want to clarify something; this was a unanimous vote of the Board of Selectmen to support this article.

Chief Fred Douglas: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to respond to the Budget Committee concern about manpower. I want to make it brief. When I took over the Police Department in 1999 one of the things that the taxpayers of the Town of Milford paid for was an MRI Audit. There were not three police officers hired at the time when I took over, but what we did was reorganize in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen to make the Police Department a lot more efficient. We did not add police officers at that point. Since I've been Chief of Police we've hired one police officer, along with reorganizing the Police Department, bringing people back from the Drug Taskforce, removing one person from the Detective Unit and putting them back on patrol and making it much more efficient.

As it relates to the calls of service before I took over there was a different way in which to total our calls. The first year that we used the new computer program which the Town paid for with a 10% match for a grant, which I wrote. It was approximately an \$85,000 dollar grant and you paid 10% of that. That re-outfitted our entire police station with new PCs, new software, with a state of the art system the New Hampshire State Police have. What we do is total the number of calls for service and/or officer activities. No matter how you cut it – whether an officer comes to your house, or calls of a criminal nature or checking your business at night, to me that's officer's time. That's what you pay those officers for. Whether it's 32,000 calls for service for officer's activities versus just calls for service the way it used to be reported, it's all officer's time. So my point, I guess, is that even though in 2000 when we started the actual call for service with the change of the program, we had 32,000 calls of service/officers activity. I put it in the Town Report every single year. I'm not trying to say we had a jump in service or jump in calls for service but you can look at those statistics. See calls for service/officer activity and that is time on the streets, what the taxpayers of this community have hired them to do and they do it. Thank you.

Chairman Amato: Are there any more questions or comments from the audience?

Al Hicks: Either a year or two years ago, I stood here and I asked the Budget Committee why this meeting room was so important for the passage of the Police Department warrant article and I'm going to ask it again tonight. I'm going to nit pick this three million dollars because someone has to nit pick this three million dollars. I read in the Telegraph today that there is about a \$100,000 dollar difference between the Board of Selectmen budget and the Budget Committee budget – I don't know if it's true but that's what the Telegraph said so I'll give you another \$100,000 dollar to nit pick. As I recall from the last design I saw of the police station that meeting room had about 850 square feet in it. If you work the numbers out on the cost of this police station, it probably works out to \$200.00 dollars a square foot. But let's say it's not, let's say it's \$130.00 dollars a square foot. There's a hundred thousand dollars in that meeting room. It would be nice to have another meeting room in Town. There happens to be three in the library, there's this room we are standing in, and other rooms in this building. Now, if someone can prove to me that without re-scheduling you can't possibly have all the meetings you want than I'll listen to you. But I think it's about time you start nit pick these numbers. I'm not going beyond that 850 feet or whatever it is. I'm not in opposition to the police station, but I haven't heard a police officer stand up here tonight and say we absolutely have

to have that meeting room. So, I would say to the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee, start nit picking those numbers.

Chairman Amato: I'm going to allow Rodney (Richey) to answer that question. But I do also want to say when we first were looking at that meeting room/training room there was going to be a generator supply built into that room with electrical outlets so if that something happened, people with oxygen could come and use that room.

Rodney Richey: Thank you Chairman Amato, I appreciate that. Because I was going to mention that was one of the alternative uses of that room, both as an emergency response location and emergency support facility let's call it. Mr. Hicks, I certainly respect your suggestion that we look at all of the pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters that make up the dollars that we are suggesting here. Can we say without that room this facility would not be a good police station? No, I would not and I don't think anyone who is even proposing this would say that. But I would ask if anyone to consider as you go through pieces of the building to keep in mind that we are not proposing just for tomorrow or next week or the year after. We are proposing for the long range. We said it will last twenty years and if in 2015 we have to do it again, if I'm here, go ahead beat me up for it. But it's an attempt to plan for the long range. I assure you that if you try to get good meeting space for twenty or thirty people to have a reasonable conference, a reasonable conversation or to get something done the rooms in the library, this room or the banquet hall are in many ways not adequate. They are not appropriate. We have not built good conference room space or training room space. For the long term, for doing it right the first time this is the right thing to do. Yes, we can nit pick and we can cut back and we can do it for less but we can also do it right. Thank you.

Chairman Amato: The Board of Selectmen would like to thank the Facilities Committee for their willingness to serve on this Committee. This concluded the hearing for Article 3, Chairman Amato moved on to the public hearing on the Budget

ARTICLE 4 – Milford Area Communications Center Equipment - \$45,990

Chairman Amato read Article 4 as follows:

To see if the Town will authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a five (5) year lease-purchase agreement, subject to a fiscal funding clause which will protect the Town in the event of non-appropriation, for the purpose of lease-purchasing equipment (Communications Control System, Dispatch Communications Console, Digital Call Recorder, Signal-to-Noise Voter), required to operate the Milford Area Communication Center (MACC) and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$45,990 (Forty Five Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety Dollars) for the first year's payment for this purpose, or take any other action relative thereto. This equipment will remain the property to the Town of Milford and will be on loan to MACC so long as the Town of Milford remains a member of MACC. The purchase price of this equipment is \$219,000 (Communications Control System - \$135,000; Dispatch Communications Console - \$29,000; Digital Call Recorder - \$25,000; Signal-to-Noise Voter - \$30,000). If this article passes, subsequent year's payments will be included in the Operating Budget. The Board of Selectmen supports this article. The Budget Advisory Committee supports this Article. This is a Special Article in accordance with RSA 32. This article has an estimated tax impact of 6 cents.

Chairman Amato introduced MACC Base representative Vice-Chairman Herman to address this Article.

Vice-Chairman Herman: Before I tell you the reasons why the equipment for MACC Base is needed, I want to tell you what MACC Base is and the role it has in Milford. Milford Area Communications Center is a communications facility that operates out of Town Hall providing dispatch services to fire, police, ambulance, and public works. MACC Base operates based on an inter-municipal agreement between member towns of Milford, Amherst, Wilton, Lyndeborough and Mont Vernon. The agreement between the towns run for five years and was up for renewal at the end of 2003. The negotiation process has extensive language clean-up that needed to happen in the document that existed. There were ongoing budgetary pressures within each of the member's communities that had some of the members looking outside of MACC Base to have services provided. And the equipment investment became a big burden when an inter-municipal agency couldn't obtain long term financing. We couldn't finance anything longer than a year. With all of these factors coming into place at the same time, Milford had to look what was going to be best for Milford now and in the long run. Full support of both the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Advisory Committee on this investment is based on multiple factors. The first is that the equipment being used by MACC Base is in dire need of replacement. If you're going to be specific on equipment, I cannot help you. You'll have to ask someone else. Milford is the primary user of the services provided by MACC Base. So, every time there is an equipment issue it's probably affecting somebody in this community. Second, MACC Base remaining an

ongoing entity saves Milford far more in one year than this equipment costs in total. The annual operating budget of MACC Base is over \$600,000 dollars. Milford currently pays 43% of \$263,000 of that. The last thing I want in Milford is another department and certainly not a department that costs over \$600,000 a year to operate. Every year the member communities remain as a part of MACC Base, as far as I'm concerned Milford wins. Third, with the purchase of this equipment Milford gains the assurance that no matter what happens with the MACC Base contracts, now or in the future Milford communications will be addressed without interruption. So for \$219,000 dollars over 5 years we buy service and monitoring improvements, infrastructure guarantee, and we further stabilize an agreement that saves us over three hundred thousand dollars a year. We feel it's a positive investment for Milford.

A citizen asked about the tower.

Vice-Chairman Herman: Nothing for the tower is in this article.

Ernie Barrett: I want to talk in relation to this. You have a tower involved and you're having a discussion in the Town. It's the most hideous thing I ever saw in my life in the example I saw that they want to put up on the top of the Town Hall. I would like to challenge the Board of Selectmen to put an article on the warrant voluntarily to ask for sense of the meeting vote to see if the people of this community want to see that tower on top of the Town Hall or not. You have the ability to add this to the warrant.

Vice-Chairman Herman: Article 4 is not a tower discussion. The tower is necessary and required to provide ongoing service for our emergency services. We rely on MACC Base every day, every hour, every minute of every day. That tower serves us and the way that is being proposed to us right now the physical structure of it serves us better and having U.S. Cellular do it means we get paid to have it up there as opposed to having to pay for it up there. The Board will take your suggestion under consideration.

Mervin Newton: Have all of the participating towns signed into the new contract?

Vice-Chairman Hermann: Yes

Mervin Newton: I don't think we should be in the alarm system business. I feel that should be a private service that ADT or Brinks supplies and I also feel that the Chief of Police thinks the present height for the tower that exists serves the police needs. Why do we need a higher tower?

Vice-Chairman Herman: We are in negotiations to have a structural engineer come in and reassure us that everything we are looking at now is good for the building. That will not do any harm to the building. There are numerous issues with respect to the tower remaining on the Town Hall roof, one being licensing issues. If we relocate, we have to look at different wattage and FCC licensing. In regards to alarms being serviced here, the alarms are tied to MACC Base and the companies pay to have that service.

Mervin Newton: I hope we do not put the tower on top of the Town Hall.

Vice-Chairman Herman: It does not serve U.S. Cellular to have it on top of Town Hall – it serves MACC Base and the Town. We need the necessary height. It serves us to have it.

Mervin Newton: We shouldn't put up the tower. I don't see any recapture from other towns to pay us back over a period of time that this item we are willing to front the money for. There should be some way to recapture the monies. I am not against the US Cellular tower but feel it should be behind the bell tower. I would like an engineering study done. The FCC would grant a temporary license if they decided to move MACC Base and the tower.

Vice-Chairman Herman: In regard to the contract with the other communities, they were very hesitant to have Milford own the equipment outright. They wanted to have language included that said we would turn it over to them or we could turn it over to them and they could buy it back from us. That's not what serves Milford best. It's best to own the equipment outright. Yes, the cell tower could go anywhere but then they wouldn't be paying for the MACC Base antennas that we need replaced. And the licensing issues are real. Temporary is different from long term. Any thing else?

Shane Hooker: Is there a cell tower article that is on the warrant? There is none? So, the warrant for Article 4 is solely for the equipment? Does the equipment have to be placed on the existing tower or can it be placed anywhere else?

Vice-Chairman Herman: The equipment is usable now and isn't attached to the tower.

Ernie Barrett: Is the cost of \$45,990 of the first year lease payment the same for the other four years?

Vice-Chairman Herman: Yes.

Ernie Barrett: What is the rate of interest through lease purchase?

Katie Chambers: We estimated 5%.

Chuck Sweeney: After meeting with Vice-Chairman Herman, Katie Chambers and other budget heads the Budget Committee decided to support this article.

ARTICLE 5 - Osgood Pond Dredging - \$0

Selectman O'Connell: Gives background on the Pond. The Osgood Pond dredging has been around for a long time. Restore the water quality of the pond. Propose action is to dredge 15 acres removing 80 thousand pounds of cubic material. This dredge material will be used to reclaim approximately 30 acres of wetlands at the BROX property. The BROX property was a gravel pit. Restore natural vegetation to the mind out areas. Preparation of dredging will take place about the end of September 2004. Actually dredging should begin in the Spring 2005 and go through of Fall 2005. Hope the dredging will take only 3 or 4 months. This is a shared cost of 65% Federal funds and 35% local and town funds. By reclaiming the area on BROX property around the brook and wetlands, they will become more useable and efficient. The actual cash cost to us is \$19,000 dollars when we finally get through all the in kind contribution that we would be doing.

A few years ago we set up a Capital Reserve Fund now contains around \$80,000 dollars and we will be using \$19,000 dollars from that fund. In order for this to happen, we as a Town have to agree we will protect and maintain the restored areas. These are really areas that we should be maintaining anyhow because they are wetland buffers. But in order to do that the Town would agree to put a protective easement on those wetland areas. It will not affect any of the useable properties.

Ernie Barrett: Is it required by law to ask the Town to use the Capital Reserve?

Katie Chambers: The Town approved the Selectmen as the agent of this particular Capital Reserve.

Ernie Barrett: They don't have to come back to the Town?

Katie Chambers: Correct, they do not.

Chuck Sweeney: The Budget Committee after some discussion voted to approve this article.

ARTICLE 6 - Conservation Commission Land Fund - \$50,000

Chairman Amato explained this has support of the Budget Committee, the Board of Selectmen, and the Conservation Commission. This article is for \$50,000. The Budget Committee did not approve the \$100,000 instead wanted \$50,000. They wanted the Conservation Commission to have some money. They were concerned it might fail at \$100,000.

Shane Hooker: Felt that the Town should understand the reason we build facilities and see our taxes go up is that we are not purchasing enough land before building can happen on it. Would have liked to see it at \$100,000 dollars.

ARTICLE 7 - Wastewater Treatment Operating Budget - \$1,565,025

Vice-Chairman Herman: The Wastewater budget is up 5.5%. The capital equipment purchases are not significantly different from last year in costs. The increases include the wages and benefits as well as additional \$50,000 we put in the depreciation account.

ARTICLE 8 –Water Budget Operating Budget - \$1,018,339

Vice-Chairman Herman – Up 5.9% with new meters that are going to be funded through the depreciation account as opposed to adding them in the budget.

Chuck Sweeney: Wastewater Treatment and Water Budget are supported by the Budget Committee.

Mervin Newton: Where do Selectmen stand on the takeover of Pennichuck Water Works?

Vice-Chairman Herman: The Water District Charter is still in process. The Charter Committee is working diligently to incorporate our concerns into the District charter. We have yet to see final product so there is no formal position.

Mervin Newton: Can Pennichuck take our water system by imminent domain?

Vice-Chairman Herman: No, unless the legislation changes it's mind.

Mervin Newton: Pennichuck is using our water lines. Are we getting any compensation for it?

Vice-Chairman Herman: There is a give and take that happens and we wheel water for them and they do it for us and the developments that they are taking on are those that the Town chose not to serve anyway for various reasons. They take on the expense of putting in the pipe so it ends up being a wash.

Mervin Newton: How much are we paying Pennichuck?

Vice-Chairman Herman: I don't recall how much we pay exactly, but there will be a public meeting when the Charter is done.

Mervin Newton: I feel it would not be a good idea to get involved with Pennichuck. I feel Milford has a better water supply than Nashua system, which is swamp water.

Ernie Barrett: Will we have an opportunity to vote in whether we want to join that Charter or not?

Vice-Chairman Herman: We wouldn't make that decision without asking the voters. We are looking at the water district and developing the charter.

Ernie Barrett: Is it required by law to go back to the voters or is that option of the Board of Selectmen?

Katie Chambers: Last year's article gave the Board the permission to join the charter. This Board is committed to involving the public in the process.

Gil Archanbault – People who have wells are we asking them to pay for this? According to this we are.

Vice-Chairman Herman: No, the water and wastewater warrants are paid by the users. They don't hit the tax rate.

Chairman Amato: The water used by the Town offices, schools and hydrants are divided up.

George Durham: Has the rate has gone up for the users?

Chairman Amato: The wastewater rate will go up 11% in April but not the water rate. Also, when the water main broke on Mont Vernon Street, if we didn't have emergency back up from Pennichuck Water Works we would have been hurting. Pennichuck sent manpower and equipment to help. We do need a back up until we come up with something else.

Mervin Newton: Are the water bills that go out in January recognized in the first quarter or the last quarter?

Rose Evans: The revenue is recognized in the period it occurred.

Mervin Newton: Then is the revenue recognized by Dec. 31st?

Rose Evans: Correct.

Mervin Newton: Why not date the bill Dec. 31st?

Article 9 – Operating Budget - \$10,334,527

Chairman Amato stated that last week the Budget Advisory Committee voted to approve \$10,108,627 dollars which is an increase of over 5.5% over last year's budget. The Board of Selectmen met and agreed with the Budget Committee on the Operating Budget. However, note there is a difference of \$225,900 dollars this amount is for the revaluation of Town property. This was originally proposed as a warrant article but after much consideration, the Board of Selectmen have determined this needs to be part of the operating budget. The Town had a revaluation done in 2000 by a private contractor. The state of New Hampshire Board and Tax Land Appeals did not accept our evaluation and has ordered Milford to do it again. The Town of Milford, not the independent contractor, is responsible for this so we have no choice but to be reevaluated again. The BTLA has agreed to let our Assessing Department to do the work needed for data collecting. This greatly decreases the cost to the Town. The Town is currently taking legal action against the private contractor to recoup our costs. In the meantime, if we do not comply with the BTLA order, the BTLA will chose a private contractor to perform the evaluation for us. It will not allow us to collect our own data and then will send the Town of Milford a bill. We will have to pay it and the cost to the Town will be around \$500,000 dollars, which is more than twice what we are suggesting. The Selectmen support this amount.

Chuck Sweeney: Budget Advisory Committee has not been able to visit this particular item. We did vote on the operating budget of \$10,108,627 dollars, which is a 5.5% increase over last year. We had voted to accept a warrant article of \$225,990 for re-evaluation of Town property upon condition of removal from the default budget and operating budget. The general thought is if we do not complete the re-evaluation of the Town property next year that money would remain in the operating budget. Discussion around the risk that might leave if the Town does not pass that warrant article. But the general feeling was it should remain a warrant article so that if the re-evaluation is not completed in 2004 that would not go back into the General Fund.

Ernie Barrett: I concur with the Budget Committee, I feel it should not be in the operating budget and it should be a warrant article. My reasoning is that it gets carried over to the following year, and to make sure that money is used for the purpose that is being used. I encourage the Board to divorce the money out of the operating budget and put it in the warrant article. I read in the Telegraph that the Board of Selectmen had created a new position in December because you hadn't expended all your budget. I want the voters to be able to vote on any new positions. We can't do a thing about someone that is hired after the fact.

Chairman Amato: Re-evaluation is a separate line item in the budget.

Katie Chambers: Wants to clarify why the Board of Selectmen put the re-valuation in the operating budget instead of a warrant article and the risk of not putting it in the operating budget and leaving it in a warrant article not having it in the default budget if it were to fail. We have been ordered to do this. If the warrant article failed then the BTLA would do what they call certify us over to the Department of Revenue Administration. That means they would tell the Department of Revenue to take over the re-evaluation. The cost in the warrant article \$229,900 is probably half the cost what a full re-evaluation would cost. They would put a contract out – the contract would cost \$100.00 per property and it would cost \$540,000 plus a 2%-5% administrative costs. The Selectmen made the choice to take the path of least risk.

Mervin Newton: I agree with Ernie Barrett and the Budget Committee that it should be in a warrant article. I feel it is inflating the budget for next year. I feel that next year will have starting point \$225,000 default so the Town has it both ways. We will have \$500,000 dollar cushion.

Chairman Amato: Following state statute, we are not allowed to leave it in the default budget it would be adjusted.

Rodny Richey: I feel that the re-evaluation costs should stay in the operating budget because it's too risky to put in a warrant article. If it should fail to pass it could cost us double jeopardy. People voting on it might not have an idea what's it's all about if it's a warrant article.

Ernie Barrett: I feel it just as safe to have it in a warrant than an operating budget. There is more chance of the operating budget being voted down than it would be if it had it's own warrant article. It couldn't be in the default budget.

Chairman Amato: Town counsel recommended that it should be in the default budget.

Ernie Barrett: The Town had another option. We could have petitioned the Department of Revenue Administration and asked for it to take and pay for it out of the surplus this year because of unanticipated revenue and under expended budget. Revenue was more than anticipated. We have an appropriation to get this job done.

Katie Chambers: That wasn't an option allowed by the Board of Tax and Land Appeals. We offered to come to Town Meeting to raise the funds. The cost is half in the warrant article is because we have been using our own assessing office staff to do a lot of the work. If the state was to undertake to do that, it wouldn't be the case.

Greg Heyn (Town Assessor): The Board Of Tax and Land Appealed ordered specifically that we do this through the Town Warrant. The steps that the Board of Selectmen are taking are only because the Board of Tax and Land Appeals has ordered it to do it during Town Meeting.

Chairman Amato: This determination happened this pass summer.

Greg Hines: It happened it May 2003.

Chairman Amato: And we didn't know what the surplus would be at the time.

Mervin Newton: Is what Ernie said is true? Can go back to state and use the monies?

Chairman Amato: That is not the approach we took.

Mervin Newton: Can the Board go back to the state and use the surplus to fund this \$225,000? You got the money in hand why load up the budget?

Katie Chambers: If it was an emergency that would be case. I don't think the state would consider this an emergency since we haven't asked the Town to appropriate the funds yet. If we had expended the funds and had an over expenditure of your bottom line they might consider it that way. I'm not sure the voters would appreciate not being approached first.

Mervin Newton: Not only do we have \$360,000 in surplus but how much other surplus from prior years haven't we used? Why ask for more money if you have monies sitting around?

Ernie Barrett: If you take the money out of surplus the people in Town would know about it because the Board of Selectmen is required to have a public hearing before you make the decision. Read RSA 32 and see what it says about petitioning the Department of Revenue for unanticipated expenses. You have the right to take it out of last year's surplus since this re-evaluation was unanticipated and that's when the audit was given in 2003.

Mervin Newton: Has questions about Article 9. We should consider having a committee to see about privatizing the ambulance service. Nashua has a privatized system and I think we are at point to do that. We will be looking to put up a new ambulance facility and it would be a good opportunity to privatize the ambulance service. It should pay for itself. I'd like to see more columns to report how much money is raised by fees and such to off-set the costs of the Planning Department and Ambulance Service. Town shouldn't subsidize the Planning Department costs and should know what our net costs is for providing the ambulance service. We could reduce our costs if we privatized.

Eric Schelberg (Ambulance Director): Just for the 2003 budget I'm anticipating that the net impact with be approximately \$150,000 dollars. A better figure will be available come April timeframe. Because our billing is about approximately 90 days behind in the sense it takes about 90 days to collect all revenue from the December 31st billing; about \$150,000 dollars for 2003.

Mervin Newton: How many sick days, personal days, vacation days and holidays do Town employees get?

Katie Chambers: Town employees start with two weeks vacation a year. They have to accrue the time, it doesn't come lump sum. After 5 years, employees earn three weeks vacation, and after 10 years, four weeks. Employees receive twenty hours of personal time a year and 120 sick hours a year. These are not carried over; they have to be used by the end of the year. The only time carried over is vacation time.

Mervin Newton: My personal opinion is 120 hours of sick time a year is too much.

ARTICLE 10 – AFSCME Union Collective Bargaining Agreement - \$98,727

Selectman Mannino - On December 8, 2003, the Milford Police Department, the Board of Selectmen, and the AFSCME Police Union received a fact-finder's report, which addressed the status of the collective bargaining negotiations between the parties. After receiving fact-finder's report, the Union employees, the Board of Selectmen, and the Police Department, are pleased to announce that each party has accepted the report. All believe that the recommendations made in the fact report will promote an atmosphere of positive employee/employer relations.

ARTICLE 11 – One-Ton Dump Truck with Plow - \$32,000

Selectman Daniels- The Selectmen went through the budget and asked the DPW Director what are the greatest needs? This dump truck is one of the greatest needs. What's wrong with the 1983 truck this will replace? It has a variety of problems including electrical. From 1997 to 2003 the costs for repairs totaled to almost \$1800.00 in repairs and plus the time the vehicle is off the road, especially to do winter plowing.

Al Hicks: My question doesn't apply to this article. Are there any items of equipment that the Town is going to acquire next year that are not under warrant articles?

Selectman Daniels – Yes, I'm not sure how many. There is a dump truck with a plow – a four-wheel drive for the cemeteries that's in the budget for \$28,000 replaces a 1991 Chevy dump truck that has two-wheel drive (95,000 miles). Again, the engine is weak and it requires lots of work. The truck is used every day except on snow days because it's doesn't handle well in snow.

Al Hicks – I feel capital equipment that requires payment for the foreseeable future should be warrant articles or clearly spelled out in the operating budget.

Selectman Daniels - Can you clarify when you say payable for the foreseeable future?

Al Hicks – A lease

Selectman Daniels – There are no leases – all trucks bought outright.

Al Hicks – I would like discussion on it when discussing the budget. I'm used to seeing capital equipment on warrant articles.

Selectman Daniels – There is a capital outlay portion of the budget. If you put everything in warrant articles then you might as well disband that part of the budget.

Rodny Richey – We have a Capital Improvement Plan and the guidelines are that the item be valued at \$75,000 dollars or more and have a useful life of five years or longer. That's the place to have requests and projects for capital equipment. We are asking our Selectmen and our Town Department Heads to manage and appropriately expend a ten million dollar budget. I think it's a waste of my and everyone else's time who votes in the voting booth to look at a \$32,000 dollar expense for replacing a ten year vehicle if we have hired people that know what they are doing to make that kind of decision. To have this as a warrant article is a waste of paper and time.

Terry Parker – I am concerned about two dump trucks almost exactly the same and we find one on a warrant and one on the budget. Either put them both on the budget or put them in warrant articles. We did the same thing last year on police cruisers.

Geri Dickerman – I agree with Mr. Parker. When people see they are only voting for one vehicle and they see one in the warrant and one in the budget. Either one way or another; warrant articles or in operating budget. Going back to Article 9, she disagrees with Mervin Newton about the sick time. She feels Town employees (ambulance, police and Town Hall) work in claustrophobic conditions after looking at the building and feel they need more time off.

Mervin Newton – Wants to talk again on Article 9 to respond to Geri Dickerman

Selectman Daniels – Wants to know if everyone is done with Article 11

Mervin Newton – I know that the police station is a sick building. The comment from Geri is not appropriate because he does support police station but feels 120 sick days is excessive.

ARTICLE 12 – 2002 Caterpillar Loader with Bucket and Forks - \$22,295

Selectman Mannino – This article serves to replace a Trojan loader that we lost in September. The vehicle had to be hauled back to the garage, the mechanic said the motor was no good. To rebuild the motor with spare parts would have cost \$10,000 dollars. The vehicle itself was only worth \$12,000 dollars resale value. After a lot of analysis, the best choice was to buy a new loader.

Chairman Amato: I want to go back to Article 9 to let people know in the operating budget there is one police cruiser for \$23,860.00. There is one replacement for this year.

ARTICLE 13 – Keyes Pool House Renovation & Expansion - \$59,527

Selectman O’Connell – Last year we appropriated \$250,000.00 dollars to make major improvements to Keyes Pool. Through the diligent planning of DPW, the project came in much lower at with a savings of \$59,527.00 dollars. However, the original proposal did not include or address any repairs or expansion to the pool house. What we would like to do and have you vote on is to reallocate that \$59,527.00 for the pool house improvements and expansion. What some of them would be: adding a separate first aid room, staff and office space, storage space (keeping equipment out of harms way and the weather), and a concession stand (we have some of programs that are self-supporting). There would be zero impact on this year’s tax rate.

Terry Parker: Budget Committee approved this item. We object to buildings with flat roofs. We see many warrant articles for schools and public buildings of all kinds requesting a tremendous amount of money for roof repairs. If you build a new structure, do not build flat roofs. The Budget Committee approves the Keyes Pool renovations.

ARTICLE 14 - BROX Residential Property Master Plan Consultant - \$22,900

This is to study the area to the south of the industrial area. A study was done about two years ago on the industrial section of the property. MIDC is using that information now to do its marketing. On the south side of the property we’re hoping to use this for Town needs. In order to plan this appropriately we feel need the whole area to be studied as to what the Town needs and will need in the future. And where the best location of these things will be. Things like the possibility of a well, athletic fields, schools, substations for fire and ambulance, cemetery, transfer station or whatever else the Town will need in the future and can use the BROX property appropriately. Some things to take into consideration are the soil types, the wetlands, or well-head protection area, and the traffic patterns. As the Town grows, we need to make appropriate plans.

Judy Parker – I feel this it is an excellent idea. It will save the Town money. This is the kind of thing I would like to see. We need to see what the best use of the properties are.

Chuck Sweeney – Budget Advisory Committee approves Article 14 now.

Terry Parker – Budget Committee supports this article. It’s terribly important that we find out what we can do with this property. But also find out what we have for resources. There is a good possibility of a major water supply on that property. Also, there is still a lot of gravel left there. I am concerned that people start talking about the waste transfer station up on that property and endangering the water source. I think a survey to find what we have got and to preserve it by not putting inappropriate things on that site and possibly endangering a resource that’s more and more important like water. Osgood Pond at one time was our water source. And if we had to use it again it would have to be cleaned up. Fish are not thriving in that pond.

ARTICLE 15 – Establishing Additional Town Forests - \$0

Chairman Amato – This includes the Rotch Wildlife Preserve which was a generous donation from the Rotch family. This property abuts Route 13 South, Melendy Road, and Ruonala Road. There are 40 acres.

ARTICLE 16 – Rail-Trail Parking - \$0

Chairman Amato –What is being proposed is the Town owns the land along the rail trail. There is a driveway that runs up through the rail trail and the property owner does not own that square of property. He owns the portion down here, which abuts Armory Road, and as you drive by you'll see a three-sided stone structure, which we believe to be an old cellar hole to a barn. That structure would stay like it is DPW would create parking spaces in there that would hold approximately four cars. Right now, the rail trail parking that we have is down at the DPW on South Street and to walk up here you're exhausted by the time you get there. To enable people to start here at this area and walk the trail, they'll have a safe place to park. We would like to transfer the ownership of a small square to the owner of the driveway. It's approximately .11 of an acre. He would give us a permanent easement to be granted to the Town for parking and access to the rail trail. Site distance is fine.

Chuck Sweeney: I have seen warrant articles as well as capital improvement recommendations for a overpass bridge put at the rail trail on Armory Road. The bridge proposal will cost about \$200,000 dollars and he knows it's not being presented today, but as a citizen has concerns about putting a bridge in that area because of safety concerns. If you eliminated the curve in the road, you would eliminate the safety concerns on the site of view for pedestrians crossing in the area. I understand the property owners prefer the curve in the road to slow drivers down.

Diane Fitzpatrick: Putting the parking here would not eliminate the opportunity to straighten out the road in the future. They have an old plan from 1978 and the road used to go straight before the train came through and they changed it to have a shorter bridge over the road. Parking will not interfere with that. The bridge is on the back burner right now because there are other things to spend money on that is more important.

Chairman Amato: In that area for safety areas there are.

Diane Fitzpatrick: There is a painted crosswalk, we put up signs "slow trail crossing ahead". There are full size stop signs on the trail to tell people there is a road coming ahead. The Conservation Commission is also planning low cost fencing barriers. Our concerns are bikes coming down and not knowing there is a road there.

Chuck Sweeney: The Budget Committee supports this article.

ARTICLE 17 – School Resource Officer - \$39,732.00 dollars

Selectman Mannino – This program was started in 1999 through a grant. We are coming before the citizens of this community for support. What it is – is a program that helps keep a certified full-time police officer, someone with experience, involved in the Milford Public School System. The primary location for the School Resource Officer (SRO) happens to be in the Milford Middle School, although he/she would handle any situations that would arise at the High School, Sage School, or even the elementary school. Some of those incidences might be truancy, theft, or other negative activity. The SRO is responsible for DARE education for the first, third, fifth and seventh grades. The officer is equipped to process fingerprints, and provide school employees with background checks. This saves officer and employee time to not have to go to the police station and keeps officers in the neighborhood. A key aspect of the SRO is that they serve as liaisons with emergency service. During school vacations the SRO is involved in normal rotations with the other police officers. The SRO stays in tune with school officials and other community groups, and stays current on information. The most important benefit for the community is it helps build a strong relationship between the police and the young people of Milford. Kids will build up a trust and it could help prevent a crime or helping someone make the right choice instead of a wrong one. This program was started in 1999 with grant funds. It is now coming before you in a warrant article to continue this program.

Peter Bragdon (Milford School Board) – I am concerned because this article says "By Request of the School Board". The School Board has not made this request. It was scheduled for discussion at a School Board meeting, it was an item requested by the administration that had originally been left off their list. Before it was scheduled for presentation to the School Board, they were informed the Board of Selectmen had put it on the Town's side for various legitimate reasons. Please change your warrant so as not mislead the voters.

Dino Pioli – We had support for this in the past – instead of having it the warrant article would like to see it in the budget. Officer deserves to be there because of positive comments from the community.

Selectman Daniels – This article cannot be put into a warrant because it was on a grant before. State law has changed: if it goes from a grant to a funded position it has to be put on a separate article, not be part of the budget. If it's accepted this year than it will be in the budget.

Terry Parker – The grant expires in the first quarter? By accepting the grant, are we technically committed to expense of the officer?

Fred Douglas – I wrote the grant back in 1999 during the Police Department reorganization. It was for \$125,000 dollars. The obligation of the federal grant was that it was a 10% match by the Town by the course of three years and the fourth year had to be completely funded by the Town. The obligation to do that, I don't think you have to, but the intent of the federal government was you had to. If you don't we won't get another grant. The obligation to the Town was to pick up the whole fourth year or you won't get another grant.

Terry Parker – Believes a man's word is his bond so feels it should pass. Feels having an officer in the schools is a good idea. On the fact that it means backing up our word, shouldn't make an agreement if we don't plan to keep them. Individual also contributes a lot to the DARE program in the schools and the youth might feel freer to contact an officer if there are problems.

ARTICLE 18 – DO-IT Operating Budget Support - \$15,000

Selectman O'Connell – DO-IT stands for Milford Downtown Ongoing Improvement Team. The mission statement: Milford Downtown Ongoing Improvement Team, a New Hampshire Main Street program is a public/private partnership working to promote revitalize and enhance the historic, natural, social and economic vitality of downtown Milford. Our mission is to involve the whole community through education and concentrated efforts of design economic restructuring organization and promotion. This warrant article is for \$15,000 dollars, which represents nineteen percent of DO-IT's budget. The rest is raised through private contributions, fund raising, and grant programs.

Compare DO-IT's role to owning an old home. You buy a house you fix it up and find it's a continual process, a never-ending process. Unlike an old house, DO-IT has a return on our investment. An estimated \$25.00 dollars is returned for every dollar spent. In the last six years, it's estimated that the program has brought in two million dollars. Many communities hire consultants to do its promotion, we have DO-IT, it would cost us so much more to have consultants come in.

ARTICLE 19 – Pumpkin Festival, Holiday Decorations, and Plantings - \$24,500 dollars

Chairman Amato - The Budget Advisory Committee does support this. The Board of Selectmen does not support this warrant article. The Board does not support this expenditure due to the many Town services currently requiring funds, which were cut from the budget. The Board determined it should be up to the Town. We did a lot of cutting on the budget. There are a lot of Town services not being provided because of the costs.

Gil Archanbault – Supports the Board of Selectmen for their decision on this article.

George Durham – Wants clarification on the articles. Does the Board of Selectmen not support Articles 18 & 19?

Chairman Amato: We support Article 18 but not 19.

Deana Carter: This is called bean counting. I think the Pumpkin Festival is a good idea. We have spent so much on sidewalks and lampposts. Three cents is a stinky little sum. We would deprive people of so much pleasure. This is for all the people that enjoy the Pumpkin Festival.

Chairman Amato: That amount of money could provide for police coverage and anything that we had to cut out of the budget.

Rodny Richey: I agree with the concern. In this light, area of support of this type that has not been offered as a warrant and that is the bus service. It was not supported because ridership was low. I see it as a real quality-of-life issue. I would like to see it at least offered on the warrant if not in the operating budget. It's a mistake to take away a quality-of-life capacity.

Geri Dickerman: We should go along with DO-IT. If we make two million dollars for the Town, I think it's a pretty good return. We shouldn't cut back.

Chairman Amato: The two million dollars is referenced under Article 18.

Geri Dickerman: I understand that, but the Pumpkin Festival brings in a lot of publicity to the Town as well as helping the retailer's downtown. I think it's something that is needed.

Chuck Sweeney: The Board of Selectmen did support it until this morning. If the Budget Committee decides to re-vote on this, it could occur. But as a Committee, we voted in support of it.

Article 20 – Land Lease or Sale for Recreation - \$0

Terry Parker: He is concerned about one statement, that the Board of Selectmen did not support this and because if they did it would have to go into the budget next year?

Chairman Amato – That's not what I said, the reason we voted not to support this, is that you see further down, there are other warrant articles that are in the same type of circumstance, the way we were voting on those articles. It wouldn't be fair to have warrant article 19 stands out. You'll see as we go further along.

Terry Parker: I heard her say that if it's approved it would have to go into the budget.

Chairman Amato – If you heard me say that I didn't mean to say that.

Terry Parker: Would hate to see these warrant articles go into the budget where they are buried. Prefers them as warrant articles because the money can only be used for the warrant article. Budget committee went along with this because they thought it was a condition that makes life more pleasant in the Town. Whether we thought it was worth the money or not thought it should go before the Town. A negative vote by Board of Selectmen feels that it shouldn't be voted by the Town.

Chairman Amato – We did look at the vote by but in past years these items historically passed. Personally, I will be voting yes on all of these when in ballot booth. Because the Board had to make so many cuts to the operating budget, we didn't feel we could support these.

Terry Parker – I feel it has no relevance to the operating budget. You can only spend it for this purpose and you can't take it out of the budget to do it or move it into the budget. The article provides this sum for this purpose only.

Vice-Chairman Herman- As a Board if we decided not to support that article and meant that we didn't want to support it at all, we wouldn't have it in as a warrant article. As a prioritization, we went through and said the police station comes before the Pumpkin Festival. If the community wants them, they are there for them to vote on.

Bob Willette – Does this means that if this does not pass there will be no Pumpkin Festival?

Chairman Amato – DO-IT as an organization would need to vote on if they could afford to do it.

Bob Willette – Does any body know how much money this actually brings into the Town of Milford from outside of Milford?

Chairman Amato – It depends on the weather

Bob Willette – I believe that the Pumpkin Festival brings in money to the community.

Ernie Barrett – How much did the budget increase this year?

Chairman Amato – Somewhere around 7.0%.

Ernie Barrett – I want to know if the summer band concerts, Pumpkin Festival, Labor Day parade, etc. were in the 2003 budget?

Chairman Amato – Last year they were warrant articles.

Ernie Barrett – I want to know if they would revert back into the operating budget so they would become an annual event?

Chairman Amato – Last year’s Budget Committee asked the Board to remove that wording.

Ernie Barrett – I feel that if the Board of Selectmen doesn’t support it then it shouldn’t be a warrant article, period. Let the people know so far in advance and if they want it in that, they should petition to put it in.

Selectman O’Connell – If I have expendable money I want to have the choice on how I’m going to spend it. As a private citizen if I have to make a choice between taxes, fireworks, Pumpkin Festival I want it to be my choice. Because there is great support for these articles, I feel it should be the choice of the voter to spend their expendable money as they see fit.

Chuck Sweeney – The Budget Advisory Committee most likely will have to re-vote to see final copy of the wording before voting. We want to see the feedback from the public they are representing.

Joe Stella – Last year we put them in warrant articles and they were overwhelming supported instead of burying them in the budget. So, they couldn’t be removed or not acted upon. The Board of Selectmen should be in support it – if they don’t they should remove it.

Liz Michaud – I want to the Board of Selectmen to reconsider the articles. Feels the Board is not only elected to manage the Town affairs but also to maintain the character of the Town. It’s a place we all want to live in. By saying that the Board of Selectmen does not want to support these articles, it sounds like it’s a cold Town.

Peter Bragdon – A comment – I agree with some of the things said. If you say you don’t support it your encouraging people to vote no. But if you truly want to see what the people want then say “We have no recommendation” and then you won’t have these complications. There is no limit in the RSA in terms of what that recommendation should be.

Chairman Amato – I didn’t realize the Board had those options.

Ernie Barrett – I looked up the information and found that the social services, Pumpkin Festival, band concerts, and so forth were in the operating budget for 2003. The only warrant was the fireworks. In essence you have extracted over \$100,000 dollars out of the budget and put it on warrant articles so it makes your budget look like it’s only gone up 6% or 5%. But if you put that \$100,000 dollars in it – it becomes a larger number.

Jack Ruonala – The Board of Selectmen should either support the articles or not have them on the warrant at all. But saying that they don’t support it means that they want the public to vote no on them. If they feel strongly that it shouldn’t be an article then they should take the heat for it and then let the people petition it as a warrant article. If they want it as warrant article then they should support it.

Chairman Amato – We have here the 2003 Warrant. Social services, Christmas decorations, fireworks, parades, bus services, Oval plantings, summer band concerts, were all warrant articles last year and they all passed.

Peter Bragdon – I believe the deadline for petition warrant articles has passed, so don’t take the warrant article off now.

Chairman Amato – Don’t be concerned about us taking them off.

Jack Ruonala – I strongly recommend you go with your original decision. Face up to the fact that it will be unpopular with some people. The Board of Selectmen being against it will have the Pumpkin Festival fail and it’s not a good approach.

Chairman Amato – I feel we will be revisiting those articles.

ARTICLE 20 – Land Lease or Sale For Recreation - \$0

Chairman Amato: The Board of Selectmen supports this article. The Budget Advisory Committee does not support this article. The March 2002 vote supported this concept. Unfortunately, the authorization for this expired at the end 2003. The MCAA would like the Town to reconsider re-authorization. The MCAA has a hugely successful program and has run out of field space. This would allow for more field space to be built with private funding.

Warrant Article #14 is the study to come up with a master plan on the BROX property – I want you to be aware that the intent of the Board of Selectmen is that this study be completed before any type of conveyance would take place.

Dino Pioli: I would like the Budget Committee to revisit their vote in order to support it. If re-wording has to be done, so be it after the BROX study is done. Often times money becomes available with grants or donations. I'd much rather build field space and an indoor facility (more winter facilities) and some of those things have come and gone because we don't have land to do that. In order for MCAA to enter an agreement, they have to have long-term lease like fifty years or they need to own the property in order to accept funds or grants. One of the grants they are working on is turning brown spaces into green spaces.

Chuck Sweeney: The Budget Advisory Committee would like the study completed before they enter in a land lease. Let the study take place first, then go back to MCAA to visit options to use Town land.

George Durham: Article #5 on Osgood Pond dredging would be taking away Adams Field. This took away an athletic field and they are asking for athletic fields that we are already short on. The Budget Committee supported taking away Adams Field.

Chairman Amato – The study of warrant #14, if it does pass, it would help to incorporate this information into the study.

Dino Pioli – If it fails because it's not supported by the Budget Advisory Committee – it's a zero dollar value. If we are able to purchase land, there it would bring money back into the Town. It would come to no cost to the Town at all. Again if there is re-wording that can be added so the Budget Committee will support it I have to emphasize that you do that. Because a lot of times waiting a year for it to come or going to committee to committee it takes forever.

Chairman Amato – It did receive overwhelming support when it was on a warrant article two years ago. Will the Budget Committee re-look at this?

Chuck Sweeney – Based on feedback from this hearing the Budget Committee will be meeting again and if any member makes a motion to re-vote and if that vote is accepted, then we will revisit and re-vote.

Mary Albino – Back to warrant #14 do we have a timeline when it will start and end?

Chairman Amato – If it gets passed in March the work would start in a month.

Ernie Barrett – I suggest Town counsel draft some language for Article 20 and make this sale contingent on passing of Article #14 and completion of the plan. If it doesn't pass, then Article 20 becomes a pass article and you can negotiate to lease the seventeen acres. That would give you both worlds to work with.

Article 21 – Social Services - \$28,900

Chairman Amato stated, under the same scenario as previous, the Board of Selectmen does not support this article. The Budget Advisory Committee does support this article. Many Town services require funding. We are leaving it to the voters of Milford.

Chuck Sweeney – We were surprised that the Board of Selectmen did not support this. The initial vote by the Budget Committee to support this was based on the support for how important it is our community supports these services that are listed here.

Bob Willette – Suggestion is that \$28,900 dollars be broken down so each one of the bullet items has a dollar value after it, so during the deliberative session so if someone wants to make amendments it would be easier to make amendments.

Vice-Chairman Herman – We had conversations about doing that but the question becomes the size of the ballot sheet.

Bob Willette – That's not what I was saying. Put the dollar value after each bullet item.

Chairman Amato – Speaking for myself, I support Article 21.

ARTICLE 22 – Summer Band Concerts - \$9,000

ARTICLE 23 – Fire Works - \$10,000

ARTICLE 24 – Memorial, Veterans, and Labor Day Parade Town Support - \$5,000

The Board's position on these articles are the same and will address what recommendations voters will or will not have on them.

Mervin Newton – If you do not allocate any funds for police or fire protection with fireworks display itself it needs to be amended or incorporated into the language.

Vice-Chairman Herman – My understanding of this is the \$10,000 goes to the display or what has to go in preparations. We spent \$8,000 on the fireworks last year. The rest of the money went to clean-up and police.

Ed Farrington – I want to talk about Article 24 and would like to thank the Budget Committee for supporting these articles. \$5,000 for an expense for a parade should be supported. I'm disappointed in the Board of Selectmen for not supporting the parades.

Mary Albino – Being a veteran and from a family of veterans, that \$5,000 dollars for a parade for the amount of veterans in Town is not too much and should reconsider. It would only cost less than one cent on the tax rate. The fireworks will grow in the next couple of years for a growing program in the Recreation Department.

Vice-Chairman Herman: On that note then, I recommend that the Recreation Commission get some language in the Voters' Guide.

Geri Dickerman – I agrees with Mary Albino. We should certainly be putting out as much as we need to for the veterans.

Ernie Barrett – If Article #24 was in the budget what line item would you put it in?

Vice-Chairman Herman – It would go under Patriotic Purposes

Ernie Barrett – Forget it – it seems to me something like this has gone on in this Town for so long. We have a ten million dollar budget and you can't find \$5,000 dollars to add to it? I want a parade in Milford for Labor Day.

Liz Michaud – I want to have these events in Milford – I don't want to take my family to other towns for these events.

Gil Archanbault – I moved to Milford four years ago. I was wounded in Korea and Vietnam. I felt like a foreigner in my own country since I lived abroad for many years. Finally, I came back to America and moved here and had to find other towns to march in their parades. If you need money for parades, I will be glad to give some.

Mary Albino – Article #22 – there will also be concessions at the concert to make money for the Town.

Vice-Chairman Herman – We need the language for the Voters' Guide by noon on Wednesday.

Terry Parker – The Board of Selectmen is punishing the public by not supporting these warrant articles. If they go into the operating budget, they will not be protected. The money would go elsewhere. They should stay in warrant articles or you take a chance you would lose them if they go in the operating budget.

Greg Heyn – All these articles cost money. Add them all up. All these events everyone are talking about – it's the police, fire and ambulance that puts them together. You people say don't take these things away from us and accuse the Board of hiding things or not hiding things but the fact of the matter is it's these people that are making these things happen so there are not tragedies – yet the citizens think it's okay for the Police Department to work in poor working conditions. No body appreciates the man-hours that the Town employees put in. From a taxpayer standpoint, I feel we are missing the big picture. We want a great community but we can't have that without the financial support.

Vice-Chairman Herman: The people that are here care enough to be here. If they give us heat, they give us heat. Whatever way they vote, they are aware of what's going on.

Gil Archanbault - The last five articles that we discussed has nothing to do with the police station.

Ernie Barrett – The Board of Selectmen should support the warrant articles.

Article 25 – Modification of Existing Elderly Exemptions

Selectman Daniels – The Selectmen have looked at the exemptions and whether increases should be made to the income qualification criteria, the asset level qualification doubled, and the exemption amount doubled. We believe that the vast majority of those that would be receiving an estimated additional \$33,000 dollars would be those that are currently receiving it. They would be just increasing the benefits that they get. The passage of this article will have a tax rate impact of approximately 4 cents or \$4.00 dollars on a hundred thousand dollar house.

That ¼ of a cent pertains to the result of new people qualifying and receiving exemptions because of the change in modification.

Rodny Richey: This is an addition on a tax break. Tell me again, how much that is in the same terms that we have on the other articles.

Selectman Daniels: Four cents per thousand. Currently we're abating \$33,000, which is being picked up by the rest of the taxpayers. If we double the exemption, it will be \$66,000. The increase will be about four cents on the tax rate.

Rodny Richey: What other abatements have we provided in the last year?

Selectman Daniels: We had veteran's exemptions.

Greg Heyn: The only other major credit it would be the veterans tax credits, they totaled \$64,200 dollars. We do have blind exemptions, about ten people, I can't give an exact figure for those ten. The major one is the elderly exemptions which is a million thirty five thousand dollars this tax year. Based on this tax rate it came out to \$32,933.15 I believe. The answer to your question is we are proposing that we are going to double that amount and the veterans tax credit this year.

Rodny Richey: There was no other abatement of taxes to any other tax paying entity in the Town? Solar abatement? Exemptions? I'm asking about abatements as well. Did any other organization have any opportunity not to pay taxes or exemptions of some sort?

Greg Heyn: We do have exempt properties that are non-governmental but it's not figured into the tax rate.

Rodney Richey: That's not something we have any control over.

Greg Hines: Yes, from the standpoint of law controls that. You either qualify or you don't. The Town can't say no if they are qualified. As far as abatements go, in 2003 we only have twenty-three abatements right now. I don't anticipate any more. Total of abatements is zero.

Selectman Daniels: Further questions?

Terry Parker: Anyone who qualifies for this is in the twilight of their years: the benefit is not great enough cause a stampede to collect the benefit of it, after reading all the things you have to do to qualify. I find this very hard not to support, since the school is 80% of our budget and these people don't have any students in our school system. We shouldn't deny our elderly. If there is any charity that this Town wants to support, it should be this.

Chuck Sweeney – Speaking as a Town citizen, this article could be aligned a little differently to try to understand the age band. People that qualify for this probably have the need. Have the ages and dollar amounts all that changed?

Selectman Daniels: The age category has stayed the same. The exemptions within those age categories have doubled. For instance, right now from 65-74 years of age the exemptions are \$20,000 dollars. 75-79 years the exemptions are \$30,000 dollars. In 80 years and older is \$40,000 dollars. So, those are changing to 40, 60, and 80 thousand dollars.

Chuck Sweeney: So the New Hampshire residents for five years is the same? The married to each other for five years is the same? Is the net income each age group not more than \$19,500 dollars?

Selectman Daniels: Currently it's \$18,400 going to \$19,500. Married persons income is \$26,400 and that's going up to \$37,000. In addition, one of the criteria is not to have assets over \$35,000 excluding the home but does not include any other real estate in or out of New Hampshire. That asset value goes from \$35,000 to \$75,000.

Chuck Sweeney: I'm supportive in general but am concerned about the aging population, plus the fact that the assumption was doubled versus using a statistical process.

Selectman Daniels: As I stated previously, we can't tell how many people will be part of this. We know it will benefit some. We will re-evaluate in another year to see if we have to do more. We don't know how many people will be eligible for the exemption.

Chuck Sweeney: Seems like a guess versus good calculations.

Selectman Daniels: We doubled the figure of the current tax exemptions.

Bob Willette: Most of the wording is from the RSA. We used our numbers from the towns around us and this one is lower. He supports it and doesn't feel it will be that costly. Katie mentioned the laws had changed.

Katie Chambers: The wording used to be required by statute. If you look at the next article, it has the wording that used to be required by statute. The legislature did a major re-write and removed the previously required language. It was difficult to write the article because of all of the changes, so the Town attorney in consultation with the state Department of Revenue of Administration came up with what is the new acceptable language. I notified the petitioners of Article 26 and provided them with the new language so they can move to amend their language at the deliberative session on the 31st.

Bob Willette – He has a concern with one statement in here that they asked to change that is where it says the state of New Hampshire. Can't it say residents of Milford New Hampshire?

Chairman Amato – I have two comments to make. I have statistics from 2002. 52% of those qualifying for the elderly exemption are non-married women 80 years and older and their median income is \$12,300.00 dollars a year. This is not a measurable item. The longer we keep our older citizens in their homes the less likely we are going to have a tax impact that is even greater.

Article 26 – Petition Article, Modification of existing Elderly Exemptions

No Petitioners here.

Article 27 – Petition Article – Study Committee for Water and Sewer Village District

Chairman Amato - Both the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee supports this article. I just wanted to mention that the Board of Selectmen has already voted to incorporate this study in the charge of the Form of Government Study Committee.

Dave Quigley – This article doesn't cost the Town a single penny. It recommends the Selectmen set up a committee to focus on analyzing whether creating Milford a water and sewer village district is in the best interest of the Town and their water and sewer users. It's based around RSA 38. It's a belief that this approach may offer an advantage for improving longevity and the health and protection of Milford's water resource. I'm just looking over the next year to study this from a cost analysis perspective.

Ernie Barrett: You might want to have a number of how many people you want on the study committee. I support the article to a least do the study. No more than seven people.

Dave Quigley: Board of Selectmen supported this and rolling it into the Town Governance Committee – do you support that or would it dilute it in a sense.

Ernie Barrett – I think what the Town Government Committee is doing is more philosophical type of thing. This is going to be a very specific thing you're going to get into nuts and bolts and dollars and cents. What I do see is this committee doing this function and being able to work with the other committee and work together and talk to each

other. So, the Town Government Committee doesn't have to repeat what they're doing. That would be like a sub committee doing a very specific area that will have to have a dollar and cent value put to it. When you talk about going into a village district there is a cost factor involved in it. They can develop that on behalf of the other committee. But I see the Town Government Committee more of a philosophical type of thing. How does the government operate? What is it doing? Not so much the cost. What is the specific cost of each area?

Terry Parker: I eventually signed the petition article. I had reservations. I feel the Town benefits from our local sewer and water department. He had to explain quite strongly, why it was very important that the Budget Committee review the expenses of the water and sewer department, which we have. People that don't pay water and sewer bills directly don't seem to understand that the Budget Committee is the only one that effectively audits what goes on in the water and sewer departments. I think it's time for a commission to review it. It should be made up mostly of people that use the service because the users don't have any good representation in Town. It won't cost them anything. I strongly support this article and agree with Ernie that it shouldn't be a large committee.

Dave Quigley – I want to point out that this doesn't suggest that the water and sewer department and their representatives are doing anything but the best today. The study has nothing to do with that just the overall management.

Chairman Amato – On the bottom on page 8 where it says the approximate total tax impact should read sixty-three cents rather than fifty-nine cents.

Chairman Amato – Hearing no further comments, I am closing the bond and budget hearing at 10:45 p.m.

The Selectmen recessed the meeting long enough to move downstairs to the Board of Selectmen's meeting room downstairs where they discussed the public input on the proposed warrant. Following discussion, the Board made the following changes to the warrant:

Article 3- Police Facility – The first note was changed from "... as revenue to offset the cost of this construction borrowing" to "... over the 20 year life of the bond."

Article 4 – Town-wide Revaluation – This article, which had been deleted and added to the operating budget was re-established as a separate article and removed from the operating budget article. This caused all subsequent articles to be renumbered accordingly.

Article 8 (now 9) – Water Department Budget – The Board re-voted 5-0 to support in order to include Vice-Chairman Herman's vote since she was not present for the individual vote.

Article 9 (now 10) - Delete notes regarding revaluation and remove amount from the operating budget (put in separate article – see Article 4 above). Add a note stating operating budget contains one new police cruiser and one new one-ton truck for the Highway Department.

Article 11 (now 12) – One-Ton Dump Truck – Change "1985 Ford" to "1993 Ford"

Article 17 (now 18) – School Resource Officer – Delete "By request of the School Board" insert after "9 months salary" "(35 weeks)".

Article 19 (now 20) – Pumpkin Festival, Holiday Decorations, and Plantings – Change amount to \$20,000 (\$15,500 Pumpkin Festival, \$3,000 holiday decorations, \$1,500 plantings). Selectman Amato, Selectman O'Connell, and Selectman Mannino supported this. Selectman Herman and Selectman Daniels did not support this.

Article 20 (now 21) – Land Lease or Sale for Recreation – Insert after "as the Selectmen deem appropriate" "but not before the finalization and acceptance of the BROX Residential Master Plan".

Article 21 (now 22) – Social Services – Change amount to \$20,000 and list the dollar amounts to each agency next to their name. Selectman Amato, Selectman O'Connell, and Selectman Mannino supported this. Selectman Herman and Selectman Daniels did not support this.

Article 22 (now 23) – Summer Band Concerts – Re-voted: Selectman Amato, Selectman O'Connell, Selectman Daniels, and Selectman Mannino supported this. Selectman Herman opposed this.

Article 23 (now 24) – Fireworks - Re-voted: Selectman Amato, Selectman O’Connell, Selectman Daniels, and Selectman Mannino supported this. Selectman Herman opposed this.

Article 24 (now 25) – Parades – Re-voted: All in favor, none opposed.

Article 25 (now 26) – Modification of Elderly Exemption – Add estimated tax impact (\$0.04)

Adjournment: 12:30 a.m.

Chairman

Vice-Chairman
